

Rogerstone Castle Evaluation, Jubilee Park, Rogerstone, Newport



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Rogerstone Castle Evaluation

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

During October 2013, Oxford Archaeology carried out a trial trench evaluation for The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) on behalf of Walters UK Rogerstone Ltd. Two trenches were excavated at the site of Mandrake House, Rogerstone, Newport, to the north-west of the remains of Rogerstone Castle.

The earliest deposit encountered was a thick stone rich layer, which contained no cultural material. This deposit was truncated by the walls and floors of a stable block associated with a house that was constructed in the late eighteenth century. The trenches did not locate any in situ masonry associated with the castle, although some of the stone within the stable walls may have derived from the robbing of castle structures.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 During October 2013, Oxford Archaeology carried out a trial trench evaluation on the site of Mandrake House, Rogerstone. The evaluation was commissioned by The Environmental Dimensions Partnership (EDP), and was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (EDP 2013) which was approved by Neil Maylan of Gwent-Glamorgan Archaeological Trust (GGAT).
- 1.1.2 The site is located approximately 3.5 km to the north-west of Newport, within the Jubilee Park development site, and is centred on grid reference, ST2675 8775 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.3 The trenching area was bound to the north-west by Mandrake House, to the north-east by Tregwilym Road, to the south-east by the remains of Rogerstone Castle, and to the south-west by the steep downward slope of the Rogerstone Castle mound to the main development site of Jubilee Park.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation consisted of two trial trenches which had a total length of 40m.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is generally level, and lies at around 33.85m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is an inter-bedded mudstone with sandstone of the Raglan formation, which is overlain by alluvial deposits consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravels.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is detailed in the desk based assessment (EDP 2012). This document should be read in conjunction with that assessment.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA would like to thank Eddy Stratford, Consultant Archaeologist, EDP, for commissioning the work; Neil Maylan for monitoring the evaluation; and Vahe Zarifian and Gabe Treharne for their support during the works.
- 1.4.2 The evaluation was managed for OA by Gerry Thacker and the fieldwork was directed by Rebecca Peacock with the assistance of Alexandra Latham.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the project as outlined in the WSI (EDP 2013) were:

- (i) To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive.
- (ii) To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains.
- (iii) To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means.
- (iv) To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
- (v) To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy.
- (vi) To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- (vii) To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
- (viii) To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

2.2 Specific aims and objectives

2.2.1 To determine the presence or absence of any structures continuing from the upstanding sections of Rogerstone Castle in the direction of Mandrake House to the north-west.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The evaluation consisted of 2 trenches, Trench 6, a 15m long trench and Trench 7, a 'T'-shaped trench, with each arm 10m long (Figure 2). The trenches were opened using a 360 degree tracked excavator under close archaeological supervision.

2.3.2 The location of the trenches was restricted because of the need to observe a Tree Preservation Order along the south-east limit of the area.

2.3.3 Deposits were removed in level spits by a toothless bucket and were checked for finds retrieval.

2.3.4 Archaeological features were recorded according to Oxford Archaeology's standard recording procedure and representative sections showing all the significant deposits in each trench were drawn and photographed.

2.3.5 Trench 6 was excavated to a depth of 2.4m. The depth and the unstable deposits meant that the trench had to be recorded from the ground surface. It was excavated in 3m long segments.

2.3.6 The trenches were monitored by Neil Maylan (GGAT), in accordance with the planning guidelines set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (EDP 2013).

2.3.7 On completion, the trenches were backfilled using the mechanical excavator and the area returned to low level vegetation use.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. This includes a general description of the soils and a stratigraphic account of the trenches. This is followed by an overall interpretation and discussion. An index of all structures and deposits form the content of Appendix A. The results of the finds analysis can be seen in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 Topsoil was present across both trenches and consisted of an organic rich loam with a high concentration of fine roots from low growing plants.
- 3.2.2 The natural geology was not encountered in either trench. However an archaeologically sterile layer of sandy silt with frequent rubble inclusions was encountered in both trenches.
- 3.2.3 Trench 7 contained brick floors and stone walls. These were sealed by the topsoil.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 Trench 7 was the only trench to contain structural archaeological remains. Prior to excavation, Trench 6 was thought to be located across a north-west to south-east aligned wall, but no evidence of this was found.

3.4 Trench 6

- 3.4.1 The trench was excavated to 2.4m total depth and contained no archaeological features (Figure 2; Plate 12). Layer 602 was observed from the trench edge, and consisted of a mid yellowish brown sandy silt, (Figure 4, section 601). This was sealed by 601, a 2.1m thick friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt with large pieces of sub rounded local ragstone and sandstone rubble (Plate 13). This was sealed by topsoil (600), a 0.3m thick organic rich sandy loam with frequent roots. No cultural material was recovered from any of the deposits within Trench 6.

3.5 Trench 7

- 3.5.1 Trench 7 formed a T-shape (Figs. 2 and 3) with north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west aligned arms.
- 3.5.2 Wall 705 (Plate 3) was constructed from large rough limestone blocks, ranging from 0.25m to 0.4m in maximum dimensions and bonded in a mid yellow brown lime mortar. The wall was broadly aligned west-east, and only the top course of this wall was visible within the trench. The length of the wall could not be established as the Tree Preservation Order prevented an extension to the south-east. Within the confines of the trench the wall measured 1.2m by 1.6m. The wall had been subject to partial collapse towards the south. Wall 705 was the earliest structure identified within the trench, and was cut into deposit 702 which was equivalent to deposit 601 within Trench 6. There was no relationship within the trench between wall 705 and any of the floor surfaces.
- 3.5.3 Wall 703 abutted the western edge of wall 705, and was linear and also orientated broadly west-east. The wall survived to a maximum of four courses, constructed from well hewn limestone blocks bonded with a mid greyish yellow lime mortar (Plates 3 and 6). The wall was faced on both sides, well finished and measured 2.1m long by 1.3m



wide. Towards the west, the wall was noted to return in a southerly direction, although only a small area of the return was present within the trench. Wall 703 was abutted by brick floor 709 on the northern side.

- 3.5.4 At the east end of wall 703 was a section of wall, 704, constructed of both bricks and stone, which were not keyed into the main stone work (Figure 4, section 704), creating a near vertical break in the stone coursing. This probably represents the blocking up of a doorway. The brick recovered from 704 showed the blocking to be 19th to early 20th century date.
- 3.5.5 A small section of wall to the western side of the trench (706) was orientated broadly north-south, and was constructed from limestone blocks, and bonded with mortar equivalent to that used with wall 703. Only a single course of the wall remained, and this was abutted to the east by floor 709. The wall could not be directly dated, but was cut by wall 707 to the north, the brick from which was dated to the 1950s.
- 3.5.6 Floor, 709, was constructed from engineering brick dated to the late 19th to 20th century, which had been laid in rectangular sections, each measuring 2.4m by 1.6m (Figure 3 and plate 5). One section was completely exposed within the trench and a further five sections were partially exposed. The bricks had a squared grooved moulded design and, when laid, formed a herringbone pattern (Plate 8), with each section having opposing grooves. This is a classic construction for stable floors to drain waste.
- 3.5.7 The floor sections were separated by strips of ferrous metal (711) and small rectangular voids, 712, were located along the edges of two of the sections at the same relative point along the section joints (Plates 6 and 8). The voids probably represent post settings.
- 3.5.8 A later wall, 708, had been inserted through the northern extent of floor 709, and formed an 'L' shape within the confines of the trench (Plate 11). The wall, which was constructed of well faced limestone blocks bonded in a cream lime mortar, was abutted by brick floor 710 to the north. Wall 708 and floor 710 represent an extension of the building to the north within the 19th or 20th centuries.
- 3.5.9 The engineering bricks in floors 709 and 710 were very closely bonded with cement mortar. Brick floor 710 was truncated at the north-east end, probably during the construction of the adjacent road.

3.6 Finds summary

- 3.6.1 There were four sherds of pot, nine sherds of ceramic building material, two brick samples and a single piece of glass recovered from Trench 7. No finds were recovered from Trench 6. The finds were all Late 19th to 20th century date.



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The archaeological features consisted of structures and deposits which were easily identifiable under the existing soil deposit that covered the excavation area.
- 4.1.2 The trenches were in an area cleared of trees and shrubs and, although there were many tree roots present, these had not impacted upon the structures in Trench 7.
- 4.1.3 The depth of Trench 6 prohibited detailed investigation of the deposits and they were observed from the trench edge, and the spoil scanned for finds.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The presence, depth and character of the surviving archaeological features was established.
- 4.2.2 The walls from the upstanding structures associated with Rogerstone Castle were not present within either trench.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 The structures found in Trench 7 relate to the plan of the stable block for the Castle Works manager's house that was built upon the site, probably in the late 18th century, and incorporates the remnants of the castle (EDP 2013).
- 4.3.2 The stone walls were not dated, and were abutted by floors of 19th or 20th century date. The walls are not likely, due to their width, to relate to the castle, although the stone may have derived from the robbing of castle structures.
- 4.3.3 The construction of the stable floor in sections, and the associated substantial external wall 703, suggest the stable block was of high quality.
- 4.3.4 The extension to the building as represented by wall 708 and floor 710 indicates that there were modifications to the stable buildings. The blocked doorway, 704, in the east-west wall 703, also reflects this. These modifications are likely to date from the time that these structures were utilised as outbuildings for Mandrake house.

4.4 Further works

- 4.4.1 The results of the trial trenches fulfilled the aims and objectives as outlined in the WSI and Neil Maylan, GGAT, was satisfied that no further archaeological works were required in the area.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of garden soil overlying a deep layer of mid pink-brown sandy silts that went to a depth of 2.4m and overlay redeposited natural of grey and yellow silty sands.					Avg. depth (m)	0.44
					Width (m)	2.10
					Length (m)	15
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
600	Layer	-	0.3	Garden soil	-	-
601	Layer	-	2.1	Rubble layer	-	-
602	Layer	-	-	Silty layer	-	-

Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE/NE-SW
Trench consisted of garden soils overlying the stone buildings/floor associated with the mansion house outbuildings.					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
					Width (m)	1.8
					Length (m)	20
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
700	Layer	-	-	Topsoil	-	-
701	Layer	-	-	Rubble layer	-	-
702	Layer	-	-	Rubble layer	-	-
703	Wall	0.66	0.45	External wall for stable block	-	-
704	Wall	0.78	0.45	Brick/stone wall, built to fill doorway gap in [703]	Pot, glass	19 th to 20 th Century
705	Wall	1.1	0.25	Stone wall, external wall for stable block	-	-
706	Wall?	0.24		Remnant of exterior West wall of stable block. Very little remaining in-situ	-	-
707	Wall	0.4		Brick wall from gardens of modern house to the North	Pot, CBM	Post 1950
708	Wall			Wall separating [709] and [710]. Forms part of	-	-



				doorway between the two floor surfaces		
709	Floor Surface		0.07	Floor surface, part of the stable block complex.	CBM	Late 19 th – 20 th Century
710	Floor surface		0.06	Exterior floor surface, to the north of [709].	CBM	Late 19 th – 20 th Century
711	Structure		0.03	2 metal grooves embedded into [709]. Part of an internal stable structure	-	-
712	Cut	0.15	0.4	Rectangular post hole, cut through [709]. Would have most likely formed part of an internal stable structure	-	-
713	Fill	0.15	0.4	Fill of post hole [712]	CBM	Post 1950



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter, compiled by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description	Date
704	1 bodysherd post medieval red earthenware, brown glazed, 17g.	19 th – early 20 th c
705	2 sherds flower pot, 74g.	Post 1950
707	1 sherd electrical insulator in white porcelain, 25g.	Post 1950

B.2 CBM

Identified by John Cotter, compiled by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description	Date
705	4 sherds moulded air/ventilation brick, partial makers stamp, 82g	Post 1950
707	1 sherd moulded air/ventilation brick, 69g	Post 1950
709	Brick sample – hard dark grey engineering brick, 2882g.	Late 19 th – 20 th c
710	Brick sample – wedge-shaped hard dark grey engineering brick, possibly from industrial feature, 177g.	Late 19 th – 20 th c
713	4 sherds moulded air/ventilation bricks, partial makers stamp, 228g.	Post 1950

B.3 Glass

By Ian R Scott

Context	Description	Date
704	A single piece of thick window glass (Th: 5mm) with one original edge. Colourless.	Post 1950.



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

EDP 2012, Jubilee Park, Rogerstone. Archaeological and Heritage Assessment.

EDP 2013, Jubilee Park, Rogerstone. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation. The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP).



APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Rogerstone Castle Evaluation. Jubilee Park, Rogerstone, Newport.

Site code: NEJU 13

Grid reference: ST 2675 8775

Type: Evaluation

Date and duration: Total of 3 days over 21st to 24th October 2013

Area of site: 360m²

Summary of results: During October 2013, Oxford Archaeology carried out a trial trench evaluation for The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) on behalf of Walters UK Rogerstone Ltd. Two trenches were excavated at the site of Mandrake House, Rogerstone, Newport, to the north-west of the remains of Rogerstone Castle.

The trenches revealed the floors for the stable block associated with the Castle Works manager's house that was built on the site of Rogerstone Castle, and which were later used as outbuildings for Mandrake House. The trenches did not locate any structures associated with the castle, but the stone from the walls may have derived from castle structures.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Newport Museum and Art Gallery in due course, under the following accession number: TBC

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Figure 1: Site location

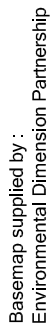


Figure 2: Trenches with location of sections



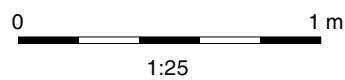
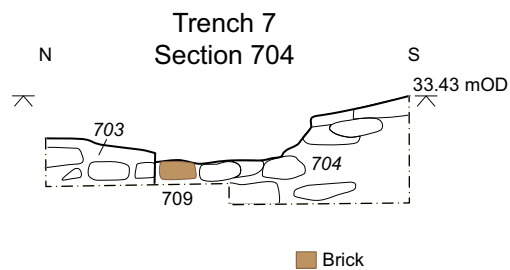
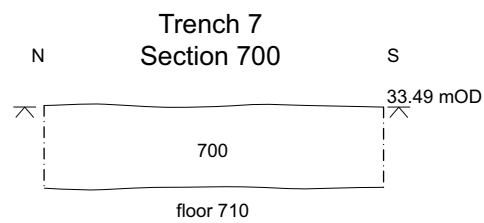
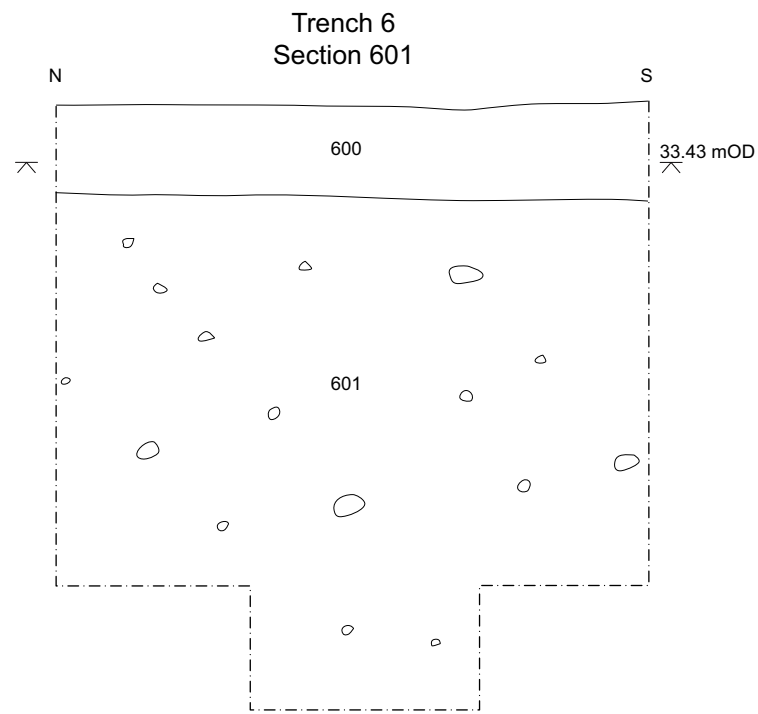


Figure 4: Sections



Plate 1: Trench 7, view to west

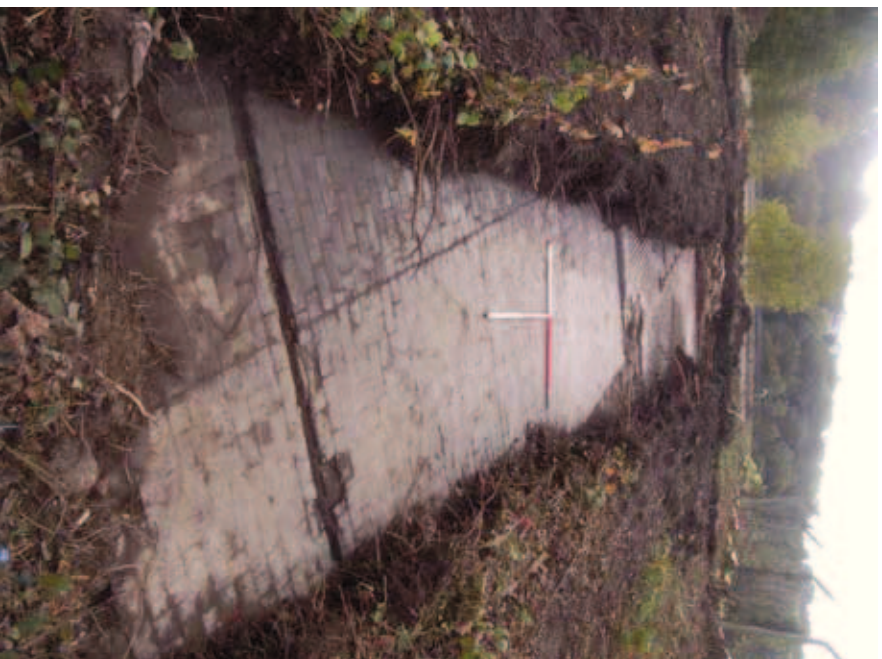


Plate 2: Trench 7, view to southwest



Plate 3: Trench 7, Walls 705, 704 and 703, looking northwest



Plate 4: Trench 7, Floor 709, looking west



Plate 5: Trench 7, Stable floors 709 and 710, view to the southwest

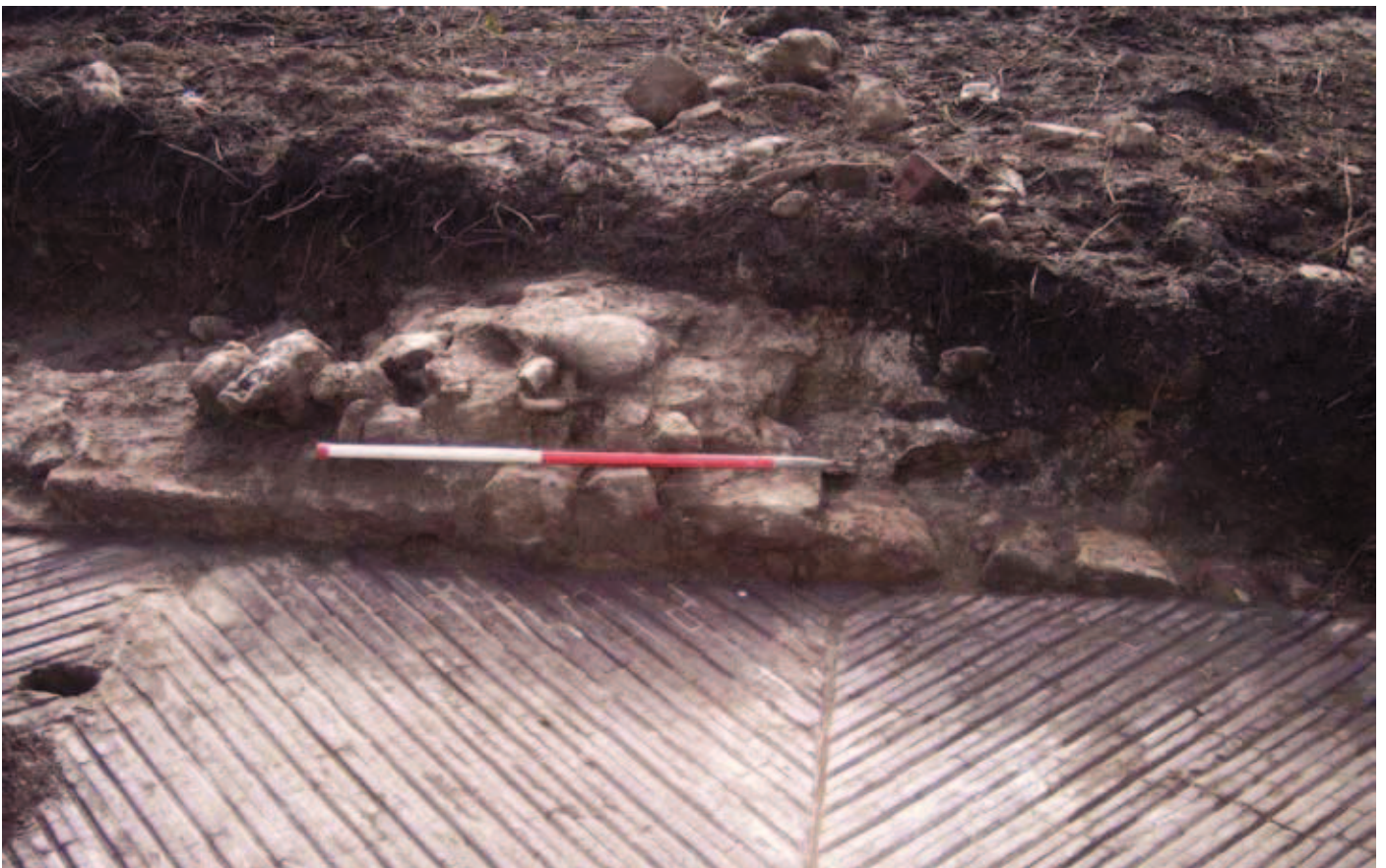


Plate 6: Trench 7, Floor 709 and wall 703, view to south

Plate 8: Trench 7, Detail of wall 704 and 709



Plate 9: Trench 7, Detail of floor 709



Plate 10: Trench 7, Floor 710, view to south

A photograph of a soil profile, likely from a stream bank or a road cut. The top of the image shows green vegetation and a red and white measuring tape held horizontally for scale. Below the surface, a dark, silty soil layer is exposed. Numerous tree roots of various sizes are visible, extending from the surface down into the soil. The roots are light brown and appear to be embedded in the dark soil. At the bottom of the profile, there is a layer of small, dark, rounded stones or pebbles. The overall appearance suggests a natural, undisturbed soil structure with significant root penetration.

Plate 12: Trench 6, Southeast facing section, northeast end of trench



Plate 13: Trench 6, Southeast facing section, southwest end of trench



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